

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 23, 25-34 and 36-42 are present in this application. By this Amendment, claims 25, 29 and 30 have been amended. Reconsideration in view of the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Entry of this Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 because the Amendment: (a) places the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) does not raise any new issues requiring further search and/or consideration (since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution and raised by the Examiner in the previous Office Action; (c) does not present any additional claims without canceling the corresponding number of finally-rejected claims; and (d) places the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The Amendment was necessary and was not earlier presented because it is made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

Claims 23, 25, 27, 29, 30 and 32-34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,106,112 to Okubo et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

By this Amendment, previously considered language regarding the outlets of the first and second ink bags being pressed directly against each other has been added in claims 25, 29 and 30. As previously recognized by the Examiner, in Okubo, "the pressing forces between the ink feed ports (23L, 23U) are exerted through the projection (14)." Thus, the respective ink feed ports 23L and 23U in Okubo are not pressed directly

against each other as claimed. See, for example, column 2, lines 21-33. For at least this reason, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is misplaced.

With regard to the dependent claims, Applicants submit that these claims are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on an allowable independent claim.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 26, 28, 31 and 36-39 and the indication that claims 40-42 are allowed. With regard to the Reasons for Allowance, Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner to any extent that such statement characterizes the invention in a manner at variance with the actual wording of the claims.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are patentable over the art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Prompt passage to issuance is earnestly solicited.

NAKAZAWA et al.
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Respectfully submitted,

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